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PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
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DE RUEHLI #0129 0621457
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P 031457Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7426
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0400
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR PRIORITY 0225
RUEHPA/AMEMBASSY PRAIA PRIORITY 0273
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 0129
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 0590
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 0543
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS LISBON 000129

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#)

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE DELEGATION HEADING TO GUINEA-BISSAU

REF: DAKAR 0263

¶1. (SBU) Portuguese MFA number two, Secretary of State Joao Cravinho, is heading to Guinea-Bissau on March 3 on a fact-finding mission, leading a delegation of the Lisbon-based Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP). According to MFA contacts, Cravinho will meet with senior military and government officials in Bissau to urge calm and press for a political solution to the crisis. The Portuguese embassy in Bissau has three diplomats, but their last ambassador rotated out a few weeks ago. Ambassador Antonio Ricoca Freire, who until recently was the MFA's Deputy PolDir for Multilateral Affairs, is the new ambassador and is traveling to Bissau with Cravinho today to take up his duties.

¶2. (SBU) MFA officials have told us that with calm apparently restored in Bissau, they do not have reports of urgent security threats to Portuguese citizens in the capital, though several citizens who are in Bissau for temporary work and other reasons have requested assistance in returning to Portugal.

¶3. (SBU) Portuguese military officials have informed Lisbon DATT that they are conducting contingency planning in case an evacuation operation is required. They also noted that Portugal is looking for ways that the CPLP can support national elections to replace President Vieira.

¶4. (SBU) Events in Guinea-Bissau this week have captured attention in Portugal and are front-page news in the Lisbon press. Guinea-Bissau is a lusophone country, was a Portuguese colony until 1974, and there are many personal and political ties between the countries. Murdered president Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira lived in exile in Portugal in 1999-2005, between stints as president.

For more reporting from Embassy Lisbon and information about Portugal, please see our Intelink site: <http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/portal:portugal>

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